



# LIFELINK

## NEWSLETTER

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## 5 Small ACTs to Help You Chill Out

Whether its strain and pressure within your unit as you work long hours to prepare for deployment, a disagreement with your spouse over something trivial that boils over, or a seemingly innocent debate with a friend that goes the wrong way, we can all expect to be blindsided by heated moments. Your reactions come quickly and before you know it, your heart is racing, your face is red and you're saying the first thing that comes to mind.

Unresolved issues can fester, impacting the individuals directly involved, other colleagues or family members, and the mission at-hand. In time for warmer weather and Mental Health Month, here are 5 Small ACTs to help you chill out and defuse tension:

1. **Push Pause.** The moment you see potential for a situation to escalate, call a time out. A lengthy explanation isn't needed; just step back and offer to address things once all parties involved have had a chance to approach the problem calmly. Even if it's just five minutes, creating some space can help you grasp how you feel, gauge what's truly important and how you can work with others to move forward.
2. **Breathe.** This simple and overlooked act is key when trying to get your emotional and physiological responses in check when the heat is rising. Taking a deep breath (two to three second inhale and exhale) can help to induce calm in the midst of calamity. If you have a few moments to yourself and can find a quiet space, try this [Quick Fix Breathing Exercise](#) or check out the exercises on the National Center for Telehealth and Technology's [Breathe2Relax app](#).
3. **Laugh.** Laughter can help thwart the release of stress hormones, kick-starting the production of hormones that are responsible for positively balancing your mood and promoting relaxation. Look at a funny GIF, head to your favorite blog or talk to someone who knows how to bring a smile to your face. A quick laugh can help you change the channel if you're focused on a negative situation and enable you to approach a solution with a smile :)

4. **Hit the gym, track or trails.** You may find that your most productive workouts occur when you need to vent some frustration. Building exercise into your daily routine can help to burn negativity and rewire your brain after tense times. Whether it's a run with a friend or mentor, weightlifting, interval training or yoga, turn to your favorite fitness regimen to maximize the mood-boost.
5. **Communicate.** Addressing conflict directly can lead to finding some common ground and getting things back on track sooner. When talking it out, use a neutral tone, make eye contact and **actively listen** to the other person or people involved to promote mutual understanding. Other ways to communicate and get things off your chest include **journaling** or speaking with a **peer support counselor**.

Identify what actions or situations are most likely to provoke you and what your usual reactions might be. This honest look can help you keep off-the-cuff reactions at bay so that you can work on finding understanding and resolution. You may not be able to control situations or others behavior, but with a little prep you *can* control your responses to them.

### CONTROLLABILITY

#### Keep An Even Keel

You may not be able to control every aspect of a challenging event, but you can control your response. Controllability is about making choices that help restore a sense of empowerment during adversity – from emotional responses to problem-solving actions.

**Every Sailor, Every Day**

navstress.wordpress.com



## Lifelink Spotlight

### BHR Leaders Hone Operational Stress Control Skills

Building strength isn't merely a physical process. We build mental, spiritual and social strength as well, and the combination is a defensive weapon against adversity. Navy leaders play a vital role in exemplifying and building strength at the unit and individual levels. In fact, "Strengthen" is one of **Five Core Leader Functions** explored in training delivered by the Navy Operational Stress Control (OSC) Program's Mobile Training Teams (MTTs). Last month, Sailors aboard amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) learned these functions firsthand as they participated in the training for deckplate and senior leaders.

OSC training provides participants with the tools to get to know their people and strengthen their teams from the inside out. Through discussion of real-life operational scenarios facilitated by the MTTs but driven by participants, the courses enable leaders to recognize signs of stress in themselves and others, take appropriate action to mitigate its effects, and promote recovery.

"Leaders are expected to take care of their people," said Lt. Miguel Magasaysay Alampay in a **related article**. Alampay is a psychiatrist for Expeditionary Strike Group Seven. He says that how senior leaders navigate stress sets the tone for other Sailors, shaping the kind of leaders that they will become.

The combination of open and candid discussion during the training paired with practical and proven tools enables leaders to build trusting relationships with their Sailors, making it easier to get to know them and recognize when things aren't right. Leaders emerge with the confidence to extend this dialogue into everyday conversation with their Sailors so that they no longer see stress as something that they have to suck up and deal with in silence.

"When leaders of a command talk about what they see as stress related issues and how course tools could be applied in their commands, OSC becomes more than a concept," said Cmdr. Curtis Price, command chaplain. "It becomes a way of doing business every day."



Learn more about OSC training [here](#).

## Plan of the Week Notes

*Below are sample Plan of the Week notes aligning with topics covered by the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign during the month of May:*

1. What can you do to improve your mood, get better sleep, increase endurance, boost energy, stay mission ready and in shape? Exercise. Physical activity has been proven to do all of the above, in addition to potentially reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Whether it's a run around the flight-deck, high intensity interval training or a group fitness class, building physical activity into your routine can strengthen your body *and* mind. Short on time or space? No problem. Try this workout: <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2010/11/12/exercising-in-small-or-confined-spaces/>.
2. Break the silence. Proactive and ongoing dialogue about stress, mental health and the value of seeking help builds trust between shipmates and leaders. In support of Mental Health Month, start the conversation now that can save lives later. Helpful facts, best practices and resources are available here: <https://go.usa.gov/x5bMc>.
3. Resilience refers to our capacity to withstand, recover, grow and adapt in the face of stressors and changing demands. Predicting challenges, maintaining a sense of control, strengthening relationships, fostering trust and finding meaning are critical to building resilience and navigating stress. Check out the *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign's Principles of Resilience infographic series here: <http://go.usa.gov/cutxG>.
4. Navy's Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) program provides Sailors the support they need after a suicide-related behavior. SAIL is voluntary and doesn't replace mental health treatment. Rather, it connects Sailors with resources designed to support recovery and reduce risk through a series of caring contacts. Learn more here: <https://go.usa.gov/x5GRR>.

## National Prevention Week: May 14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's (SAMHSA) National Prevention Week is right around the corner. This annual initiative is aimed at increasing action surrounding mental health and substance abuse issues through community centered approaches. Each day focuses on a different issue, including suicide prevention on Friday, May 19th and Mental Health and Wellness on Saturday, May 20th. Promotional materials, messaging and engagement ideas are available here: <https://go.usa.gov/x5GyA>.

## News and Resources

Maintain Family Strength  
When Both Parents Deploy  
[Real Warriors](#)

Managing Suicide Risk and  
Access to Firearms: Guidelines  
for Providers  
[DHCC](#)

Security Clearances and Mental  
Health - Part 1: Judgment  
Matters  
[HPRC](#)

5 Small ACTs to Strengthen  
your Mental Health  
[NavyNavStress](#)

How to Stay the Course for  
Good Mental Health  
[DCoE](#)

Resilience Tips for Job-Seeking  
Military Spouses  
[HPRC](#)

How Veterans can Aid  
Resilience by Writing  
[Real Warriors](#)

Navy's LiveSafe App Provides  
Sailors with Valuable  
Resources  
[NavyTimes](#)

Video: I'm Good, But are You  
Ready to Listen?  
[YouTube](#)

## Current and Upcoming Events

### May Observances

National Physical Fitness  
Month

National Mental Health Month

Military Appreciation Month

National Prevention Week  
(May 14-20, 2017)

Memorial Day (May 29)

### SPC Training Webinars

May 11, 0800 central  
May 24, 1600 central  
[Register here](#)

## 5 Benefits of Working Out with a Buddy

We all know that staying fit and exercising is important. We also know that staying motivated to work out on a regular basis can be hard.

That's why finding a good workout buddy is one of the smartest fitness moves you can make. Working out with a buddy can give you:

1. **Motivation:** When you work out by yourself, it's easy to lose motivation. A buddy will support you and cheer you on to help you reach your fitness goals.
2. **Accountability:** It's easy to bail on your own workout. But it's much harder to ditch a workout when you know you're going to be letting someone else down. Having a reliable workout buddy will help you stick to your goals.
3. **Friendly Competition:** As humans, we like to be competitive—even if it's just good, friendly competition among friends. A buddy will challenge and push you to do more than you might do alone.
4. **Companionship:** Working out can be boring, especially during long cardio sessions. Having a buddy to talk with while working out will make the time go by faster.
5. **Workout Variety:** A buddy can share new exercises or workouts so that you can switch up your routine. This will keep your workouts fresh, as well as keep you motivated to try new moves.

So who qualifies as a good workout buddy? Here are some tips of what to look for when choosing one:

- A good attitude. You want someone who is encouraging and positive.
- A compatible style of motivation. You may need a drill sergeant to get motivated, or maybe a cheerleader.
- Similar schedules. You want someone who is dependable, as well as available to consistently work out with you at the same times.
- Similar fitness goals. You need to share similar fitness goals to be effective workout partners.
- You want someone who makes working out enjoyable and even fun.

Finding a workout buddy can be as easy as looking around the gym during your workout, or calling a fitness-minded friend.

### Want more?

- Check out these **upper body** and **lower body workouts made specifically for partners**.
- **Try these #WarriorReady workouts with your workout buddy.** Each 15-minute workout features four exercises that work your whole body and can be done anytime, anywhere.
- Get motivated together with these festive and fun workouts on **Guard Your Health's Tumblr page**.

The above content was supplied by **Guard Your Health** - an Every Sailor, Every Day campaign partner. Guard Your Health is a health and medical readiness campaign sponsored by the Army National Guard Chief Surgeon's Office. To learn more about improving your health, visit the Guard Your Health **website**, like "Guard Your Health" on **Facebook**, and follow @ARNGHealth on **Twitter**.

